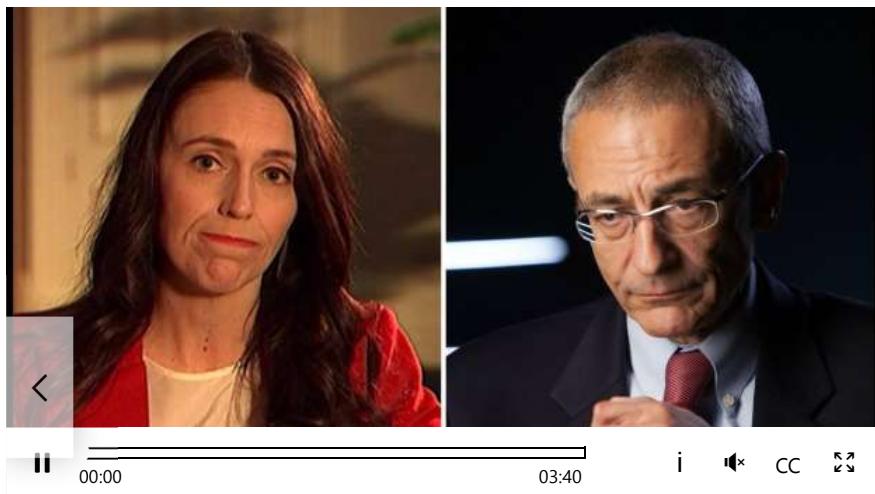


Newshub.

## 2020 NZ election a 'juicy target' for major hack - John Podesta

Tova O'Brien 10/03/2019



The victim of the world's most notorious political hack is warning New Zealand's election next year is at serious risk of a major cyber-attack by Russia and China.

In an exclusive television interview, Hillary Clinton's former presidential campaign manager, John Podesta, told Newshub that New Zealand is a big juicy target - and that hacked information could be weaponised as fake news.

Having run the White House as chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, and acting as counsellor to President Barack Obama, Mr Podesta is of the most powerful people in US democratic politics.

He was also the campaign manager of presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton - although that didn't go well.

During the campaign, tens of thousands of Mr Podesta's emails were hacked by the Russia government.

The hack and release on WikiLeaks was believed to be a major factor in Ms Clinton's loss to current president Donald Trump.

"Vladimir Putin must be sitting in the Kremlin saying this is the best return on investment I've got  
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a pliant president of the United States," Mr Podesta says.

New Zealand's top spies warned Parliament last month that our election is also vulnerable to attack, and Mr Podesta agrees.

"I'd say very worried," he told Newshub. "I don't see why they couldn't do it. And there are other state actors as well."

At the top of that list is China.

"There are other actors in the region including China that may have a high degree of interest in being able to penetrate what the private conversations of people in NZ politics and NZ Government are looking at," Mr Podesta says.



© Image: Newshub + Getty; Video: Newshub Ms Clinton's campaign manager says we should be "very..."

New Zealand is a member of the Five Eyes spy network, a powerful intelligence club made up of the US, UK, Canada, Australia and us.

He says we're a "juicier target", and should guard against hacked information being weaponised as fake news.

"What's new is this weaponisation - the use of social media to spread discord, lies, dissatisfaction - that's I think what you've got to look out for," he says.

Mr Podesta played a starring role in one of the great conspiracy theories of the election - his hacked emails included an exchange about a Washington DC pizza joint called Comet Ping Pong.

"[The rumours were] that HC and I were running a child porn ring, which had no basis in anything, but a guy showed up with a gun and ended up shooting up a pizza parlour," he says.

This is a cautionary tale from someone who understands too well the influence and damage hacking and fake news can do.

concerned about.

*Mr Podesta is in New Zealand for a Global Progressives event.*

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